

Editorial

First of all, a big ‘thank you’ to Louise Cooke who has stepped down as Joint Editor of *Library and Information Research* after three years of hard work. Louise was instrumental in moving the journal from a printed to an electronic format, a journey that was both exciting and frustrating as we grappled with the new technology and ways of working. As her co-editor I benefitted hugely from Louise’s greater experience and her academic approach to the task, and on many occasions I had reason to be grateful for her advice and wisdom. I wish her well as she concentrates her efforts on her ever more demanding ‘day job’.

This issue is particularly close to my heart, focusing as it does on the work of practitioners and students. It features research in school libraries, a university library and a cross-sectoral study.

Two of the papers are from Library and Research Group (LIRG) prize winners. Cristina Sacco Ritchie was a very deserving winner of the 2009 LIRG student prize. Her dissertation examined two aspects of librarianship in Scotland: public and school librarians’ salaries and the self perceived status of librarians in schools. Ritchie describes some interesting findings, especially in the area of professional librarianship where she reports a clear link between the holding of a professional qualification and the perception of professional status within the school. Ritchie makes a compelling argument for having a qualified librarian in every school.

Andrew Walsh, winner of the 2009 LIRG research award, used his funding to conduct a study of student attitudes towards the library’s use of mobile technologies, in particular text messaging. Walsh found that students were overwhelmingly positive about receiving text message based services as long as these were useful to them (for example overdue item reminders). They were less keen to experiment with ‘new’ services for which they couldn’t see the point (such as QR codes) or to receive podcasts or vodcasts (for fear of incurring high network charges). This work has not only informed practice at the University of Huddersfield but it is also very pertinent to other academic libraries currently considering implementing these services. It is a particularly good example of a small scale but highly useful piece of research undertaken by a practising academic librarian.

Two of the key objectives of *Library and Information Research* are to encourage reporting of research by practitioners and to encourage reflective and evidence based practice (Library and Information Research, 2010). Janet Clapton’s article, on the motivations, barriers and supports for LIS practitioners writing for publication, is therefore extremely appropriate for the journal. Clapton herself is a practitioner, familiar with the challenges of fitting her research and writing around her busy working life, so she fully understands the joys and the tensions which arise. Drawing evidence from an examination of practitioner authorship in twelve peer reviewed and professional journals and magazines, an online survey of

practitioners, and discussions with professional colleagues, Clapton found that the greatest motivators for writing were to share ideas with others and for professional development; the chief barrier was lack of time. There was certainly no lack of interest in the topic, with 100 responses to the survey in the first 36 hours. Clapton concludes with some suggestions for how her findings could be used to promote practitioner writing.

All four book reviews in this issue have been written by practitioners (perhaps motivated by professional development?). Two books cover new technologies in librarianship – Needham *et al.*'s *M-libraries: libraries on the move to provide virtual access* and Engard's *Library mashups*; the others examine literacy information landscapes (Lloyds's *Literacy information landscapes: information literacy in education, workplace and everyday contexts*) and support for research students (Allan's *Supporting Research Students*). It is always interesting to read a professional colleague's view of a current book so I urge you to take a look at these.

If, having read one of the papers in this issue, you feel inspired to undertake your own research project or write up a project that you have already completed then please do consider submitting your work to *Library and Information Research*. We would love to hear from you.

Miggie Pickton

Reference:

Library and Information Research (2010) *Focus and Scope*. URL: <http://www.lirg.org.uk/lir/ojs/index.php/lir/about/editorialPolicies#focusAndScope> [accessed 17.05.10].

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